

WHAT MATTERS



Elenore Arend
Environmental Assessment Office
Province of British Columbia
by email: Elenore.Arend@gov.bc.ca

Dear Ms. Arend:

We are sending this letter on behalf of an organization known as What Matters in Our Valley. We are residents of the Bulkley Valley living in the Smithers and Telkwa areas. We are deeply concerned about the proposal to establish an open pit coal mine near Telkwa and the banks of the Telkwa River currently under review by the Environmental Assessment Office. Such a mine would have a significant impact on our area, including by posing a risk of polluting the Telkwa and Bulkley Rivers with acid rock drainage and other toxic materials.

Under the current EA process, there is no provision for funding for communities to obtain independent and objective analysis of the risks posed by development projects such as this.

We understand such "Intervenor" funding was contemplated at the time that the new environmental review process legislation was passed into law. Without access to the resources that such funding would provide, local communities and the EAO office itself are left to rely mostly on reports prepared by the "experts" hired by the proponents. As we know from past projects, these experts are often guided by the objectives of the proponents and the advice they provide is highly suspect due to this inherent conflict of interest.

We are requesting that "Intervenor" funding be made available for communities such as ours during the Telkwa Coal review process.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Jay Gildea
For WMIOV

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